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ABSTRACT

A study of the relationship between the language medium and the content of education is summarized. Language and curricular contents of English and Igbo language texts used in Nigerian primary schools between 1957 and 1976 are examined according to fifteen categories. Research is reviewed which supports the hypothesis that a change from English to an African language as the medium of education will also involve a change in the content of education. Of the English texts, 95.5% were written by Europeans; all the Igbo texts were written by Africans. The subject matter of the Igbo texts shows a strong, supportive and mutual relationship between home and school. The English texts contain unfamiliar allusions; they portray the family as unhappy, and the village as sparsely populated and inhabited by the poor and illiterate. Differences also existed in the presentation of the concept of education, the city, the nation, ethnicity, art and culture, and moral virtues. Specific differences and similarities in presentation of the child as an individual, the family, the school, the village, the city, the nation and the world are discussed. It is concluded that a change from English to native language texts necessarily involves a change in content. A number of positive recommendations for developing native language primary education materials are given. (AMH)

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LANGUAGE IN AFRICAN EDUCATION:

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CURRICULAR ELEMENTS OF SCHOOL TEXTS

Chuka Okonkwo

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Introduction

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We are pleased to publish Dr. Chuka Okonkwo's essay on language and education in Africa as an occasional paper of the Comparative Education Center. The topic of language and education is an important one. It is not only of pedagogical interest, but of political and social significance as well. As Dr. Okonkwo points out, the language of education relates very much to the content of education. The issues raised in this paper are complicated. The consequences, political, social and educational, of particular language policies are widespread. Blood has been shed in India, Belgium, Canada and other nations over language issues. Language is clearly a means for the creation of an independent culture, and a few Third World nations have attempted to mobilize language in the process of nation-building. We hope that this essay will stimualte further analysis of issues related to language in education. For it is only through careful analysis of relevant issues that alternative policies can be developed and a full understanding of this important question can be achieved.

This essay is taken from Dr. Okonkwo's doctoral thesis, "Language and Education: An African Case", which was written under the direction of Dr. Gail P. Kelly in the Department of Social Foundations, Faculty of Educational Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo. Dr. Okonkwo is uniquely qualified to write on this topic. A graduage of the Alvan Ikoku College in Nigeria, he holds a Master of Education degree in foreign language education and a Master of Arts degree in French from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Dr. Okonkwo has recently returned to Nigeria, where he is on the staff of the Ministry of Education of Imo State.

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> Moreover, it must be understood that an early start with languages may save the adult person years of laborious work later on, at a period when his energy and time could be put to better use.
>
> Professor Paul Christophersen[1]

The issue of language in education, particularly in the sub-Saharan states of Africa, is a very serious one. This paper summarizes a study I conducted to determine whether changing the language medium of education from a colonial language (such as English) to an African language (such as Igbo), necessarily involves also a change in the content of education.[2]

This study involves an examination of language and curricular contents of texts used in the former Eastern Nigeria and conterporary East Central State of Nigeria[3] primary schools between 1957 to 1976. To examine these texts, I had evolved fifteen major categories.[4] Using these categories, I have tried to explore the following questions: Did the Igbo texts necessarily teach anything different from the English texts? Were the differences in content emphases and/or in the definition of aims and objectives of education? Were there marked differences in the interpretation of the past and in the presentation of the present? What were the differences (and/or similarities) in the treatment accorded to Europe and to Africa, as well as to European and African figures? Who were named in texts in both languages as important educational, social and religious reformers - Africans or Europeans? What are the differences/similarities in what the child is told about himself as an individual, about his family, his customs and institutions, his group values, his nation, and life outside Africa? What percentage of pages and stories/readings are devoted to historical, cultural and political events in

the texts? What did each set of texts omit that the other set reminds the child about?

Mother-Tongue Literature

Most arguments on language use in education have been in favour of the child's mother tongue. To Dante, the reason for this is simple. The materna locutio is a nobler language than Latin because it is natural to us, while the other (Latin) is rather of an artificial kind.[5] In early sixteenth century, Richard Mulcaster had observed in his Elementaire that: The question is not to disgrace Latin, but to grace our own language..... I do not think that any language, be it whatsoever, is better able to utter all arguments, either with more pith, or greater planesse, then our English tongue is...[6] Locke, on his part, made a decisive impression on the realistically minded educators of the eighteenth century when he recommended that French should be taught before Latin in all French public schools.[7]

In addition to these, the report of the conference of (UNESCO) experts which met in Paris in 1951,[8] concluded that axiomatically the best medium of teaching a child is his mother tongue. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which he belongs. Psychologically, it is a system of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium.

Most writings appearing in the past few decades have presented arguments along the line of the UNESCO conference report. Resnick, for example, argued that education in the mother tongue is important because it is one of the chief means of preserving whatever is good in native customs, ideas and ideals, and thereby preserving what is more important than all else; namely, native self-respect. He contends that no greater injustice can be committed against a people than to deprive them of education in their own language.[9]

Making a similar argument, Sharma insists that no language can take the place of the mother tongue in education, and that no educational system can afford to disregard it without serious detriment to the mental and social development of the child. Thought and language, he says, go together as body and soul. One is dependent on the other for existence. They grow and decay together. The child thinks and dreams in the language which was used at the time he walked his way from the state of an infant to that of a member of a language community. This naturally is the mother tongue. And, for this reason, the mother tongue happens to be the first condition of schooling for the intellectual development of the child.[10]

In an article entitled, "The Present System of Education,"[11] Gandhi noted that the use of a foreign language as the medium of instruction creates insurmountable difficulties for students. He argued that as a result of such difficulties, it takes about twelve years to obtain the matriculation certificate, and even then, the general knowledge acquired over this period is pitifully inadequate. He identified two major problems engendered by this situation. First, students develop the habit of learning whole passages of required textbooks by heart. Second, a foreign medium does not merely occupy time in the curriculum, but limits what can be learned and how it can be learned.

Views similar to Gandhi's were expressed earlier by Tagore who saw the influence of a foreign language on the content of education as rather pernicious. Schools in culturally backward societies, he wrote in 1906, far from being integrated to the society, are imposed on it from the outside. The courses they teach are dull and dry, painful to learn and useless when learned. The schools are little better than factories.[12] Thus for Tagore, an English language oriented education did not merely generate all the difficulties of learning through a foreign language, but imposed a wholly foreign culture. Foreign, that

is, to the culture of the child who is exposed to it - since education in a foreign language bears no relation to the objective reality of the child's environment.

> "The books he reads paint no vivid pictures of his home, extol no ideals of his society. His daily pursuits of life find no place in those pages, nor does he meet there anybody or anything he happily recognizes as his friends or relatives, his sky and earth, his mornings and evenings, his cornfields and rivers. Education and life can never become one in such circumstances and are bound to remain separated by a barrier.[13]

Moreover, the few[14] language-oriented educational researches in Africa, have made conclusions that seem to favour the literature on mother tongue education. First, they have shown that mother tongue learners scored consistently higher in reading, arithmetic and social studies than those learning in English; and that there are better home-school relations among the mother tongue learners.[15] Second, that differences between pupils studying in their mother tongue and those learning in a foreign language might increase rather than decrease with time. Third, that the English vocabulary of foreign language learners leaving the primary school at 12+ is smaller than their vernacular vocabulary on arrival at 6+, and also lower than the vocabulary of English children leaving an infant school.[16] Fourth, that there is a loss of learning through using English as a medium of education.[17] Fifth, that children are at their best when taught in their mother tongue and asked to recall in the same language.[18]

The arguments provided in the literature, summarized above, and the conclusions reached from empirical research on language use in African education, form the basis of this paper. If the assumptions underlying the above arguments as well as the research conclusions are correct, I will expect that a comparative analysis of school texts in English versus any African language will show that a change from English to an African language as the medium of education, will also involve a change in the content of education.

Selection of Texts for Analysis

In this study, I have examined all the English and Igbo language texts[19] that were used in the former Eastern Nigeria and contemporary East Central State[20] (ECS) primary schools between 1957 and 1976.[21] These included texts prepared by Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO) some of which remained in use in ECS schools until early 1970. Also, texts prepared by the Nigeria Educational Research Council (NERC) which is the academic wing of the Federal Nigeria Ministry of Education. NERC textbooks and other publications are intended to serve as guidelines for the states which are at liberty either to adopt or to adapt them.

Most of the Igbo texts currently in use in the ECS schools, were prepared under the aegis of the ECS School Board (ECSSB). The ECSSB in the academic wing of the ECS Ministry of Education directly charged with the administration of primary and secondary schools and with the production of school texts. However, in the preparation of the Igbo texts, the State School Board works in close collaboration with The Society for the Promotion of Igbo Language and Culture (SPILC).

In all 92.5 percent of the English texts used in this study were written by Europeans and 95 percent of them were published by European-owned and European-operated presses. All the Igbo texts were written by Africans and all were published by European presses.

Differences and Similarities in Presentation: An Overview

The pattern of differences (and similarities) between what texts in both languages taught, are evident from the organization of the tables of contents of The New Oxford English Course, Book 4 and Igbo Mbu, Book 4 which are typical of texts analyzed in this study. Lessons in the English language texts contained such unfamiliar titles as "Ali and the Angel," "Tea Without Sugar," "John Saves the Train," and so on; whereas, all the titles of the Igbo text came from local proverbs, folktales, folk songs, and riddles. In other words, the subject matter

of education in the Igbo text shows that there is a strong and mutual relationship between the Igbo child's home and the school; and between what the child hears at home and what he reads about in his school texts.

Specifically, Table 1 shows that in the English language texts, the major emphases in the first three years of school are on the family, the school, the village and everyday life experiences. In fact, at this stage, most of what the English texts taught has the family and/or the village as the focal point. Hence, a total of 86 pages (or 29 percent of the total numbers of pages of all texts used at this level) dealt with the family and the village. The English language texts portray the African family as being an unhappy one. The husband and wife do not live happily together and the children are always quarrelling among themselves. The following excerpts are typical of what the texts say about the African family:

> The old man picked up the needle from the floor and spoke to the tailor's wife.
>
> 'You have a good husband who works hard,' he said. 'But you aren't a good wife. You must try to make him happy and help him with his work. I'm going to wish for that!'[22]

And,

> 'Biola! Alade!' Mrs. Bako was really angry. 'If you're going to quarrel every time you talk, then every time you quarrel you won't be allowed to speak for at least one hour - not even to ask for a drink of water. And even if that doesn't cure you, your father and I will have an hour's peace'.23

Also, when David needed a driver for his cart, he said to his sister, Mary:

> 'I want a driver for my cart. Please give me your doll. She can sit in the cart.' But Mary said, 'No. I want my doll.' When Mary said, 'No,' David was very angry. He pulled the doll's arm, and Mary pulled its other arm. The doll's arm came off. 24

Moreover, the English texts portrayed the village as sparsely populated, economically weak and generally inhabited by the poor and the illiterate.[25]

In the Igbo language texts used in the first three years of school, Table 1 shows that the major emphases are again on the family, the village and daily

TABLE 1

COMPARISON TABLE ANALYZING THE CONTENTS OF THE ENGLISH/IGBO LANGUAGE TEXTS

English Language Texts						Igbo Language Texts		
Actual No. of Pages at Levels**		Actual No. of Stories**	% of Overall Total	Category	% of Overall Total	Actual No. of Stories**	Actual No. of Pages at Levels	
1-3	4-6						4-6	1-3
				Major Subjects of Interest				
22	63	86	12.4	Individual	1.2	11	3	5
39	2	53	7.6	Family	14.2	126	60	47
38	62	96	13.8	School & School Life	2.9	26	8	8
47	2	56	8.1	Village	16.0	143	77	56
11	85	88	12.7	City	0.3	3	2	1
-	25	32	4.6	Nation (Nigeria/ Africa	7.5	67	28	13
4	10	25	3.6	World	0.9	8	4	2
-	6	11	1.6	Political Information	7.2	64	28	8
21	42	64	9.2	Ethnicity	0.9	8	4	3
6	46	44	6.3	Science & Industry	1.6	14	6	5
9	33	48	6.9	Nature Description	9.4	83	28	14

TABLE 1 CONTINUED

English Language Texts					Igbo Language Texts			
Actual No. of Pages at Levels**		Actual No. of Stories**	% of Overall Total	Category	% of Overall Total	Actual No. of Stories**	Actual No. of Pages at Levels	
1-3	4-6						4-6	1-3
				Major Subjects of Interest				
2	35	38	5.5	Health & Safety	1.2	11	5	4
50	42	136	18.7	Daily Life	25.3	224	64	45
5	17	39	5.6	Art and Culture	8.0	71	22	14
				Major Moral Themes				
7	13	51	7.3	Achievement	6.3	56	16	6
9	17	46	6.6	Affect	7.6	67	32	26
3	28	46	6.6	Courage	8.0	71	21	17
8	16	69	9.9	Respect	10.0	89	39	36
3	22	31	4.5	Self-Discipline	0.3	3	1	2
3	-	15	2.2	Group Solidarity	8.1	72	19	21
-	9	32	4.6	Patriotism	4.3	38	12	3

TABLE 1 CONTINUED

English Language Texts					Igbo Language Texts			
Actual No. of Pages at Levels**		Actual No. of Stories**	% of Overall Total	Category	% of Overall Total	Actual No. of Stories**	Actual No. of Pages at Levels**	
1-3	4-6						4-6	1-3
3	7	22	3.2	Major Moral Themes: Praise for Commendable Behavior	6.7	59	16	15
11	37	61	8.8	Condemnation for Blameworthy Behavior	1.7	15	3	3
4	22	31	4.5	Other (e.g. revenge, hostility, hatred, etc.)	0.7	6	2	2
296	575	694		Overall Total**		887	487	323

** The actual No. of pages do not add up to the overall total No. of pages; the actual No. of stories do not add up to the overall total no. of stories; and the percentages do not add up to 100 percent because: some lesson themes may have been listed under more than one category, while others may not have been listed at all if, in my subjective opinion, the lesson's theme did not coincide with any sub-category in any section.

life experiences. A total of 103 pages (or 32 percent of the overall total) dealt with the family and the village. The texts confirm that the emphasis on these two institutions (which are the core of education all through the primary school) is due to the fact that right from the beginning of time, the spirit of communal effort has been the driving force in Igboland, or, in fact, in all of Africa. As Nzeako writes, in Omenala Ndi Igbo (one of the social studies texts used at this stage), in the Igbo culture:

> emphasis is on a complex whole characterized by a communal familyhood, reinforced by the unity and interrelations of things, and focused on feelings regarding a three-dimensional world of ancestors, the living and the unborn, on the one hand, and a world of chukwu or chi (the deities) and spirits, on the other, in response to human behaviors and its contradictions. 26

The texts show that this same spirit is still symbolic of the forces at work in present-day Igboland.[27]

As Table 1 shows, in the English language texts, the presentation of stories dealing with individuals in the first three years of school, took 22 pages (or 7.4 percent of the overall total at this level); whereas in the Igbo language texts, stories about the individual took only five pages (or 1.5 percent of the overall total). In the English language texts, stories dealing with the school took 38 pages (or 13 percent of the overall total at this level); while such stories in the Igbo texts took only eight pages (or 2.5 percent of the overall total at this level). Thus for the English language texts, education is given in the school; whereas, for the Igbo language texts, education as a continuing response to the needs of life, is given at home (in the family and in the village) and the school is only a part of the extended family structure.

Similarly, differences existed at this level in the presentation of the city, ethnicity, art and culture. Materials dealing with the city took eleven pages in the English texts and only one page in the Igbo texts. Materials dealing with

ethnicity took 21 pages in the English texts and eight pages in the Igbo texts. And, materials dealing with art and culture took five pages in the English language texts and fourteen pages in the Igbo language texts.

With reference to moral messages, Table 1 also shows that there are marked differences between what texts in both languages emphasized in the first three years of school. In the Igbo texts, materials dealing with such items as love, kindness and forgiveness took 26 pages (or 8 percent of the total at this level); while in the English texts such materials took just nine pages (or 3 percent of the overall level total). The Igbo texts spent 17 pages (or 5.3 percent of the overall total) on readings dealing with courage, bravery and determination; whereas such readings took only three pages in the English texts. Similarly, on materials dealing with obedience, politeness and respect, the Igbo language texts spent 36 pages (or 11 percent of the overall total at this stage); while the English texts spent eight pages (or 2.7 percent of the overall total) on such materials.

There are also marked differences in the treatment of themes dealing with helpfulness, loyalty and cohesiveness; as well as in the treatment of themes dealing with praise or condemnation of blameworthy behaviors. For example, the Igbo texts spent 21 pages (or 6.5 percent of the overall total at this level) on themes dealing with loyalty, helpfulness and cohesiveness; whereas, the English texts spent just three pages on materials dealing with these themes.

In the last three years (of primary education), the horizon broadens in the English language texts with a shift from the family and the village, to the city and the nation, and the world outside Africa as the central core of education. In the English language texts, the presentation of materials dealing with the city, the nation and the world as Table 1 shows, took 145 pages (or 21 percent of the overall total). As the city and the nation become the focus of education,

the texts stressed materials dealing with the individual, the school, ethnicity, science and industry and daily life experiences. Table 1 shows that the presentation of materials dealing with the individual, at this stage of primary school education, took 63 pages (or 11 percent of the overall total at this level); the presentation of the school took 62 pages (or 10.8 percent of the overall total); ethnicity took 42 pages (or 7.3 percent of the overall total); science and industry took 44 pages (or 7.7 percent of the overall total) and the presentation of materials dealing with daily life experiences took 136 pages (or 24 percent of the overall total).

In the last three years of primary education, the core of instruction in the Igbo language texts remains the family and the village. At this stage, the presentation of materials dealing with the family and the village took 137 pages (or 28 percent of the overall total). Every other subject taught at this level in the Igbo language texts was discussed with reference to its relationship to the family and/or the village. For example, materials dealing with the city show that despite all the good things there - good roads, electricity, big stores, white collar jobs, pipe borne water, etc. - there is always the desire to return to the quiteness of one's village, as this short excerpt shows: "Aguu ila obodo ebe a muru ya naagu Omenuko."[28] (Omenuko is feeling home-sick and wants to return to the village where he was born).

With reference to moral messages, Table 1 shows that materials used in the English language texts stressed condemnable acts, achievements, courage, respect, self-discipline, hostility and revenge. The Igbo language texts, on the other hand, stressed items dealing with love, kindness, forgiveness, courage and determination; respect, group solidarity, patriotism (love for one's nation, language and culture); and praiseworthy acts.

Moreover, in Table 1, the column showing the "actual number of stories at all

levels," brings out more clearly the differences between what texts in both languages stressed (or did not stress). For example, the Table 1 shows that texts in both languages stressed items dealing with the family, the village, nature description, daily life experiences, achievement, affect (love, kindness, forgiveness...), courage and respect. However, the English language texts also stressed materials dealing with the individual (presented with a total of 86 readings or 12.4 percent of the overall total); the school (presented with a total of 96 readings, or 13.8 percent of the overall total); the city (presented with a total of 88 readings or 12.7 percent of the overall total); ethnicity (presented with 64 readings or 9.2 percent of the overall total); science and industry (presented with 44 readings or 6.3 percent of the overall total), and condemnation of blameworthy behavior (presented with a total of 61 readings, or 8.8 percent of the overall total). The Igbo language texts, on the other hand, also stressed themes dealing with political information (presented with a total of 64 readings or 7.2 percent of the overall total); group solidarity (presented with a total of 72 readings or 8.1 percent of the overall total) and praise for commendable behavior (presented with a total of 59 readings, or 6.7 percent of the overall total).

I must point out here that even when the English and Igbo texts appeared to stress the same moral themes, a closer look reveals that there are culturally-loaded differences in what they actually taught. For example, under the moral category labelled achievement, the English language texts emphasized the value of school-oriented learning, competitiveness, ability to solve personal problems, means of attaining personally stated goals, limits to achieving such goals, etc. The Igbo language texts, on the other hand, emphasized the value of learning (in its broadest sense - home, school, communitywide-oriented), willingness to work as a member of a group (extended family setting, age group setting, the village community setting, the secret society setting, etc.), ability of the group to solve

their collective problems, perseverance and so on.

Under the category labelled affect, the English texts stressed love of self, love for heroes, kindness that yields meaningful returns (to self). The following excerpts from The New Oxford English Course, Book 3, are typical of the shylock-like situations that English texts portrayed:

> One day, Mr. Ojo went to see a farmer because he had lent the farmer five naira to buy seeds for his field. He said to the farmer, 'Two months ago, I lent you five naira.... You must pay me now - the five naira I lent you and five naira more. You must pay me ten naira, and I want the ten naira today, at once'. 29

Again, when another farmer went to his Chief to ask for a piece of good farm land, the Chief said to him:

> 'Yes, I can give you a piece of good ground; but you must give me one half of everything that you grow there'. 30

In the Igbo language texts, however, the emphases were on love for others (members of the extended family, members of the age-group society, members of the village community, etc.), fairness, compassion and forgiveness in judging others.

Thus, the Igbo texts, in an attempt to give the child a firm foothold on his immediate environment, made the family and the village the focal point of instruction at all levels. The English language texts, on the other hand, deemphasized the family and the village in texts used in the last three years of primary education. At this stage, the English texts draw the child completely away from his natural milieu and introduce him into an entirely new environment - the city, the school and the outside world. Typical of this situation is what the mathematics books (all of which are issued in English) taught him.

In mathematics,[31] the child is confronted with problems on "papering walls," allowing for windows, doors and fireplaces! This child has only seen walls plastered with a mixture of sand and stone, and room floors covered with

rectangular grass mats. As for fireplaces, the only one he knows about is a three-stone support which his mother uses in cooking. Secondly, he is asked to imagine two waterpipes filling a cistern with water, and a third pipe emptying it - all turned on simultaneously, and to estimate, given their dimensions, when the cistern would be filled with water. Here is a typical example from the text:

> How many gallons of water will be required to fill a rectangular cistern 2 yards long, 1½ yard wide and 1½ feet deep to within 6 inches of the top, if 1 cubic foot of water = 6¼ gallons? 32

Thirdly, came problems on trains rushing past each other at varying speeds. Instead of drawing up at the platform one at a time as the child knows Nigerian trains do, they did not stop to fill up at the stand pump, but rather scooped up water from between the rails at some cubic feet per second.[33] Nigerian trains did not do this. There is only one track and the trains waited at the stations for one train to pass the other and there was no water in between the lines to be scooped up. Naturally, the child concludes that mathematics involves, like most other things the English language texts teach him, mere flights of fancy and has nothing to do with life - not in Africa, anyway.

The next section points out the differences and similarities in the texts' (English versus Igbo) portrayal of the child as an individual, and in their presentation of the family, the school, the village, the city, the nation and the outside world.

Differences and Similarities in the Presentation of the Child as an Individual

Table 1 shows that the English language texts presented materials dealing with the individual in 85 pages and with a total of 86 stories (or 12.4 percent of the overall total); while the Igbo language texts presented such materials in a total of eight pages and with only eleven stories (or one percent of the overall total). Texts in both languages portray the child as polite and

sympathetic (particularly to the sick); adventurous, courageous and persevering. The following excerpts are typical of what the English and Igbo texts say about the child:

> When he was out of the smoke and fire, David stopped coughing. But he found that he could not walk without pain, because his feet and legs were burned too, and his arms hurt him. Every step was painful, and, as he went on, he felt himself getting weaker and weaker. But he said to himself, 'I must get to the road.' 34

and,

> Ka ohuru nwanyi ahu, egwu atughi ya.[35]
> (When he saw the old woman, he was not afraid).

The English language texts also portrayed the child as careless, mischievous, dishonest, lazy, cheats in his school work and very unappreciative of the good things others do for him. The following extract from Book 2 of The New Oxford English Course shows that David did not appreciate the orange the Chief gave him:

> David threw the orange and it went over the wall. Two boys saw the orange, and a goat saw it too. The goat walked to the orange and picked it up in its mouth. Then the goat ran away. 36

The Igbo language texts, on the other hand, portrayed the child as hard-working, untiring, very helpful to people (particularly to members of the extended family), diligent, respectful, obedient, neat, kind and honest.

The contradictions between the two presentations and the inconsistency in the English language texts become more apparent when the child (who is reading the English/Igbo texts at the same time) discovers that he is hard-working but very lazy; honest but very dishonest; helpful and kind to people but very michievous and unappreciative of what other people do for him; and so forth. Thus, a pattern of presentation develops based, on one hand, on a judgment from the outside and, on the other hand, on a judgment from within. Table 1 shows that this is typical of the general trend all through the texts; hence, the English language texts

stressed themes dealing with condemnation, while the Igbo language texts stressed themes dealing with praise.

Differences and Similarities in the Presentation of the Family

Texts in both English and Igbo made the family one of the central cores of instruction in the early stages of primary education. The English language texts devoted a total of 39 pages on 51 readings about the family; while the Igbo language texts spent a total of 47 on 61 readings about the family in the first three years of school. Figure 1 shows that the English language texts presented the child's family as made up of the father (who is also presented as the head of the family), the mother, the aunt, the uncle, brother and sister, and the grandparents. This is unquestionably the European concept of the extended family being presented to the child as his own. Figure 2 represents the presentation of the family in the Igbo texts. A close look at Figures 1, 2, and 3 clearly shows the difference between the presentation of the African family as given in the English texts and the actual extended African family structure as portrayed in the Igbo texts. In Figure 2, the child easily recognizes the people living in the same compound with him - people he knows as brothers and sisters; fathers and mothers and "dedes." The English texts, as Figure 1 shows, portrays the African family as generally monogamous and usually with very few children. Figure 2, however, tells the child that the African extended family is very complex, that the African family is generally polygynous and usually has very many children, as the following excerpt from Nwana's Omenuko shows:

> Ma ugbu a Omenuko nwere ndinyom asa, nwe kwa umu otutu. Ndinyom Okoroafo di ano; Ndinyom Nwabueze di abuo. 37
>
> (Now Omenuko has seven wives and very many children. Okoroafo has four wives and Nwabueze has two wives).

Texts in both languages stressed the importance placed in family education

Figure 1

The Presentation of the African Family
in the English Language Texts

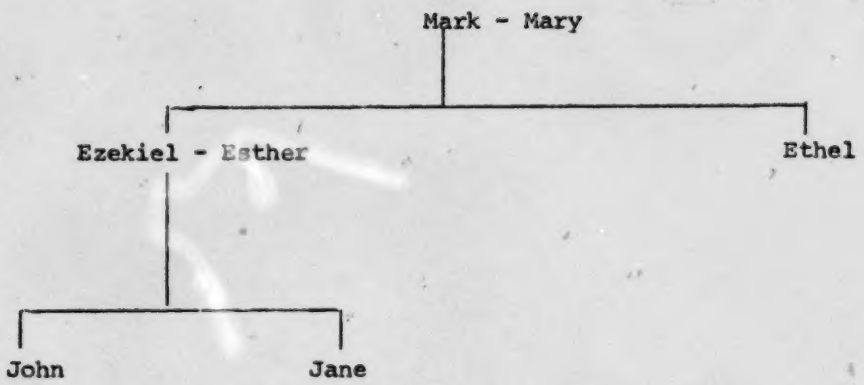


Figure 2

Presentation of the African Family in the Igbo Language Texts

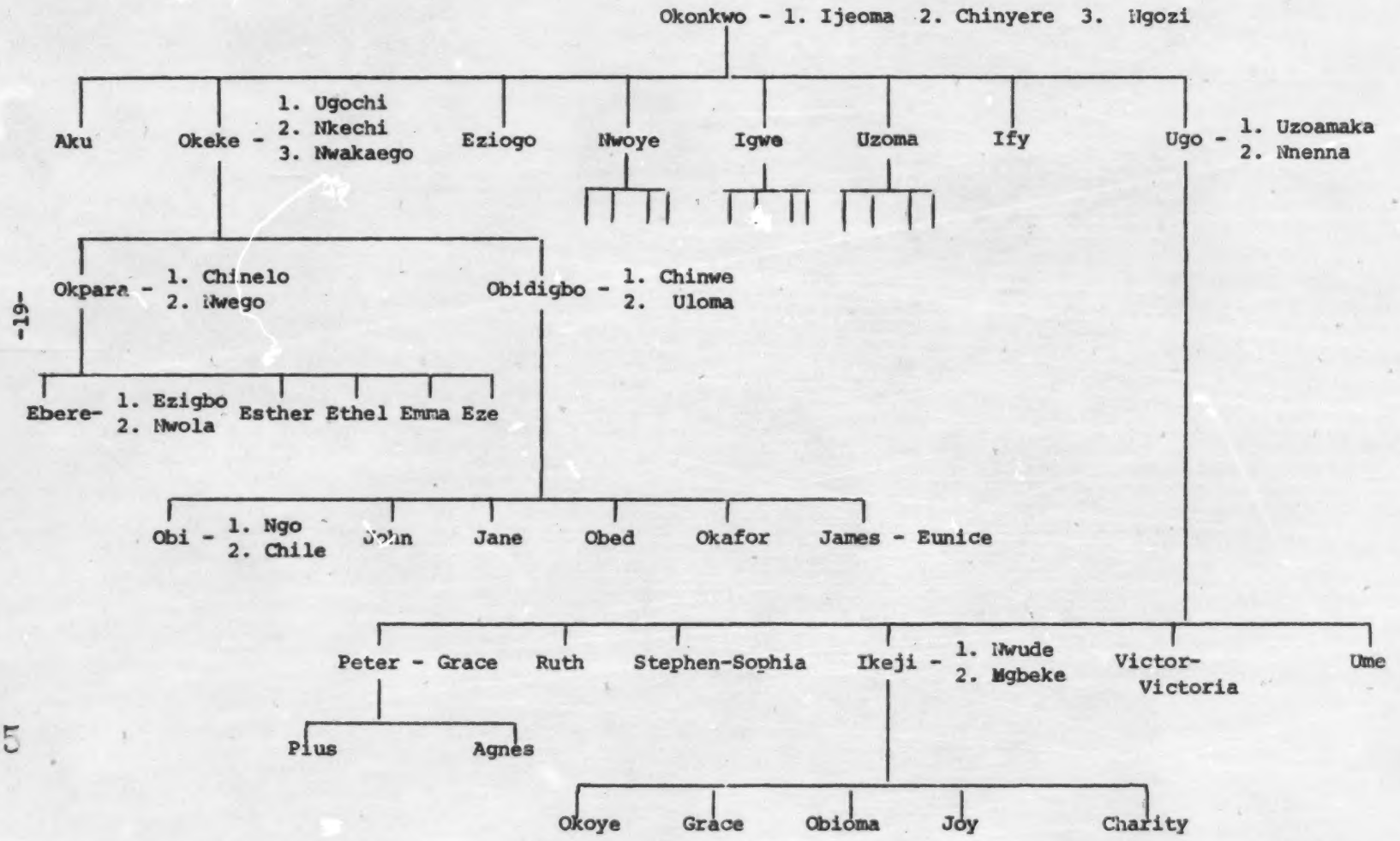
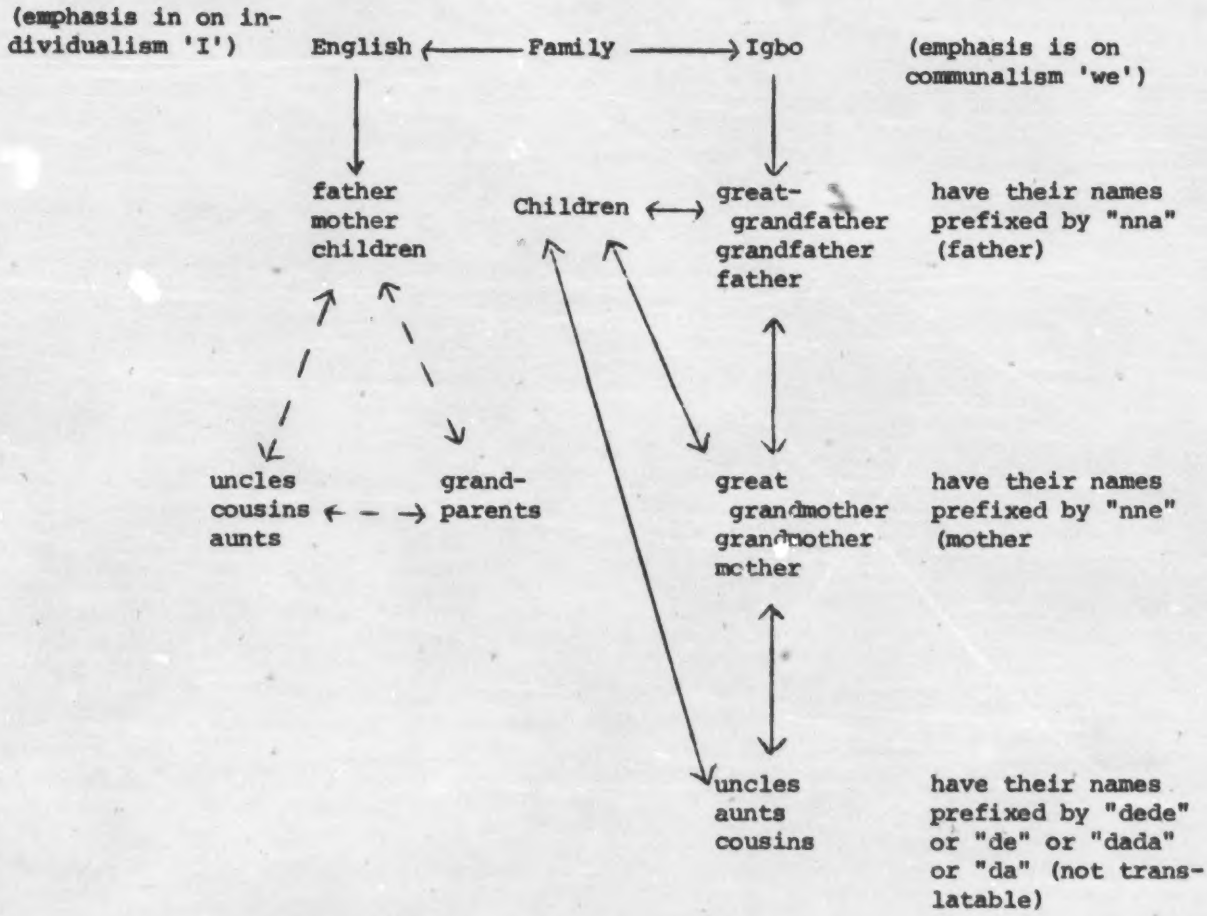


Figure 3

English/Igbo Family Relationship



on the development of such values and attitudes as togetherness, sharing, consideration for others, tolerance, honesty, truthfulness, respect, kindness, thoughtfulness, and work habits. However, while the English language texts argued that these goals are hardly ever achieved; the Igbo texts demonstrated that these attitudes and values are easily acquired and internalized in the family. For example, the English language texts portrayed children in the African family as being continuously at loggerheads with one another, as the following excerpt shows:

> David took a very big bite of of his bun. Then he dropped it and shouted, 'Oh! Give me some water quickly. What did you put in that bun, Mary? It's hot.'
>
> And Mary danced about the room, and said happily, 'That will teach you not to laugh at me.' 38

The Igbo language texts, on the other hand, give the child to believe that the degree of solidarity in the traditional African family is exemplary. For example, when Omenuko met with a misfortune, he only told members of his family about it, and they all decided to share equally with him the burden of his unfortunate experience and the blame for his mistakes, as this excerpt shows:

> Ha nile we nokotaa nzuko n'otu. Ya na umunne ya wee kwuritaa n'etiti onwe ha na ha ga-agbapu la obodo ozo bu Ndi Mgborogwu. 39
>
> (He held a conference with the members of his family and they decided they were going to run away to the land of the people of Mgborogwu).

With regards to the division of labor in the family, texts in both languages agreed that the girls help their mothers, while the boys help their fathers.

Differences and Similarities in the Presentation of the School

Table 1 shows that the English language texts presented materials dealing with the school in 100 pages and with a total of 96 readings (or 13.8 percent of the overall total); while in the Igbo language texts materials about the school

took only 16 pages with a total of 26 readings (or 2.9 percent of the overall total). There are differences in the description of the school compound (or premises) as presented in the English and Igbo language texts. The English language texts described the school premises as including only the school building and the school garden (thus depicting a typical European school compound). In the Igbo language texts, however, the school compound includes the school building, the school garden, the school farm (as distinct from the garden), the football (or soccer) field, the tennis court, the netball field, the headmaster's quarter and the teachers' quarters.

Secondly, there are differences in the definition of the objectives of education as given in texts in both languages. The following excerpt taken from Ilesanmi Social Studies, Book 5, is typical of the definition of the functions of education in Africa as given in the English language texts:

> The major function of education is to help Africans to remove ignorance, disease and fear. The eradication of these elements will help make the African nation great. 40

To the Igbo language texts, however, the major function of education is:

> to help maintain cultural continuity through building the content of education on familiar environments which would encourage the child to participate fully in the education process. 41

Differences and Similarities in the Presentation of the Village

The presentation of the village in the English language texts took a total of 49 pages, with 56 readings; whereas, in the Igbo texts it took a total of 133 pages with 143 stories (or 16 percent of the overall total). The English language texts described the village as non-modern - the houses are not modern but small mud huts with rectangular or rounded thatched roofs, and the inhabitants are generally poor. The following excerpt is typical of the texts' portrayal of the village:

> At last he reached a village where the people have no cattle or sheep, and lived in huts made of mud and leaves. 42

The Igbo language texts argue that village houses are big and that the tradition of roofing the houses with leaves made from mat is deep-rooted and meaningful because, wealthy as he was, Omenuko did not roof his house with zinc. The following excerpts are typical of the texts' presentation of the village:

> Ulo ukwu abuo di n'etiti, otu n'aka nri, otu n'aka ekpe, ha bu ulo abuo Omenuko. Otu bu ebe o na-arahu ura n'abali, otu bukwa ebe o na-ano onodu ehihie... Otutu madu ga-eche na ulo ndi a bu ulo gbamgbam; ha abughi, kama ha bu ulo atani nke bu akirika ngwo. 43

> (The two large central houses, one to the right, the other to the left, are Omenuko's. One is where he sleeps at night, the other is where he receives visitors in the day... People might think these houses are roofed with zinc; they are not, rather they are roofed with leaves made from bamboo palm).

The English language texts portrayed the village Chiefs and Obas as interested in the welfare of their people; and yet these Chiefs and Obas are so dishonest that some of them would even kill the same people they pretend to love to make sure their vices are not brought out in the open, as the following excerpt shows:

> For Orhumorhia would tell his friends and they in turn would tell their friends, until everybody knew that the Oba of Benin had been so frightened of one of his warriors that he had climbed up a magic kolanut tree to escape from him. No one must ever know what happened. So, the Oba killed Orhumorhia. 44

The Igbo language texts, on the other hand, portray the village Chief as hard-working, diligent, kind, very much concerned about the welfare of his people and full of wisdom. A typical excerpt from Nwana's Omenuko reads:

> Omenuko na-aru oru onye eze nke oma n'anya Ndi Mgborogwu. O na-elekota ulo ya na ndi ya anya nke oma, na-elekotakwa ulo nna ya ukwu bu Mgborogwu, nke oma. Ndi Dekee huru na o bu ezi onye eze nke na-aru oru ya nke oma, o nwekwara ike na amamihe n'oru. 45

(Omenuko is a very hard-working Chief among the people of Mgborogwu. He is looking after his people and the people of Mgborogwu very well. The Europeans regard him as an excellent Chief who is full of wisdom).

Differences and Similarities in the Presentation of the City

The English language texts presented materials dealing with the city in a total of 96 pages, with 88 readings; while the Igbo texts presented such material in three pages and with a total of three readings. The English texts portrayed everything in the city as modern, which means that they are good imitations of Western models - the buildings are tall, fine and modern; the economic structure is modern (because in the city, the non-modern agrarian economy which characterizes the village gives way to industrialization). The following excerpt is typical of the texts' portrayal of the newness of the city:

'There are so many new factories along the road that I can hardly recognize it. They weren't there four or five years ago. 46

The Igbo language texts portrayed the city as a place where people go to spend a short time, see a few things and then return to the village, as the following excerpt shows:

Nnamdi gara Enugu. O noro ebe ahu onwa abua. Ebe ahu ka o huru nnukwu ugbo ala toro ogologo nke a na-kpo trenu. 47

(Nnamdi went to Enugu. He was there for two months. It was there that he saw a long vehicle which is called the train).

To the English language texts, the city is a very lively place, the center of activity - traffic jams, beating of drums, blaring of radios, the hooting of horns, and so on.[48] The Igbo language texts, on the other hand, talked about the city in terms of its artificiality and very impersonal nature as opposed to the naturalness and the accommodating nature of the village. Moreover, the Igbo texts defined modernity in terms of a revolution based on the diversification

of agricultural production, and not in terms of industrializing the African society. Thus, the texts insist that the contents of education should be defined through the land, as the following excerpt shows:

> Ebo na-ele nna ya anya hu otu asi ako ji na otu osi achu nta; n'ihi na-ala anyi mmuta kasi mmuta nile bu mmuta etu esi alu olu ubi. 49
>
> (Ebo observes how his father farms and hunts because in our land, the greatest knowledge one could possess is the knowledge of how to farm).

Differences and Similarities in the Presentation of the Nation

The English language texts took 25 pages and 32 readings in the presentation of materials dealing with the nation; while the Igbo language texts spent 41 pages and a total of 67 readings (or 7.5 percent of the overall total) in the presentation of materials dealing with the nation. Most of the readings contained in the English texts about the nation mainly pointed out differences between the different ethnic groups in Africa in terms of language, traditions and beliefs.[50] The Igbo language texts argued that though the languages differ, all ethnic groups in Africa share a common culture, common traditions and beliefs. What appear as differences, the Igbo texts say, are in effect a result of the influence of the culture (or cultures) imposed on ethnic groups through colonization and trade and the extent to which each particular ethnic group resisted or accommodated the intruding culture (or cultures).

The Igbo texts supported this argument by pointing out that all ethnic groups in Africa today share in common such cultural patterns as communal ownership of land; strong feeling of lineage and family solidarity; feeling of continuity for the unborn and the ancestors; important rites at birth, puberty (the initiation ceremony), marriage and death; and so forth. Moreover, all ethnic groups in Africa share such common beliefs as that a spiritual force infused such natural objects as rocks, rivers, mountains, trees, animals, and

so forth.[51]

Furthermore, the title to lesson 1 of Ogbalu's Igbo Mbu, Book 3, is "Afrika bu Ala m" (Africa is my land); and the title to lesson 2 of the same book is "Nigeria bu Obodo m" (Nigeria is my country/land). So the Igbo language texts tried to develop in the child not only a sense of identity but a feeling of belonging.

Still further, Table 2 shows that the most frequently named historical individuals in contemporary Igbo language texts are Africans - (31 out of 41 names that appeared very frequently in texts used between 1966-1976). The Igbo texts paid glowing tributes to the contributions and achievements of these African individuals either in the fight against colonialism or in working hard to provide the needs of their peoples. In the pre-1966 Igbo texts, however, Europeans were named much more frequently. This is because until 1966, 91 percent of all the primary schools were run by two missionary bodies under the control of Europeans - the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the Roman Catholic Mission (RCM). These two bodies provided ten out of the fourteen members constituting the Textbook Committee. All the ten members were Europeans, and thus they greatly influenced the content of textbooks.

Table 2 also showed that the most frequently mentioned historical figures in the English language texts used between 1957 to 1976 were Europeans. In English texts in use between 1957-1966, Table 2 shows that 42 out of the 55 names that appeared most frequently were Europeans. Again, between 1966-1976, 23 out of the 43 names that appeared most frequently were Europeans. In the English language texts, the contributions and achievements of these very frequently named Europeans were viewed very favorably when compared with their African counterparts. For example, Lord Lugard was considered such a hero that his name appeared 35 times in the English texts used between 1957-1966; whereas his African counterpart -

TABLE 2

COMPARISON TABLE OF IMPORTANT HISTORICAL FIGURES NAMED IN THE ENGLISH AND IGBO LANGUAGE TEXTS

ENGLISH TEXTS						IGBO TEXTS			
	No. named	Total no. of times named	% of total no. named	% of total no. of times named	Category	% of total No. of times named	% of total no. named	Total no. of times named	No. named
1957-1976	51	369	65	67	Europeans	35	33	176	25
	23	112	29	20	Africans	57	60	287	45
	79	549			Total No. named			505	75
Pre-1966	42	301	76	77	Europeans	64	58	164	23
	9	43	16	11	Africans	22	33	56	13
	55	392			Total No. Named			256	40
1966-1976	23	177	53	55	Europeans	11	17	32	7
	17	104	38	33	Africans	79	76	221	31
	45	320			Total No. Named			280	41

The percentage do not add up to 100 percent in any section because there are some characters named three or more times that were neither Europeans nor Africans - e.g. Jesus Christ and Mohammed.

Nnamdi Azikiwe - (a man who fought for African emancipation from colonial grips and finally achieved independence for Nigeria in 1960) was named only 18 times. To the authors of the English language texts, most of whom were Europeans, the destruction of the ancient kingdoms of the Fulani Empire and the amalgamation of the Hausa and Fulani countries in the North with the Igbo and Yoruba countries in the South - Lord Lugard's greatest achievements - were considered more important historical achievements than the struggle against Europe for political and social emancipation by the people of Africa.

From the above examples, it is obvious that in controversial issues involving European versus African figures and institutions, a historical perspective favoring Europeans' figures and institutions is adopted in the English language texts. Similarly, the African language texts adopted a stance favoring African figures and institutions.

Presentation of the World

Table 1 shows that the English language texts treated issues dealing with the world outside Africa in a total of 14 pages and with 25 readings; whereas the Igbo language texts treated such issues in six pages and with a total of just eight readings. The English texts discussed materials dealing with the outside world in three different ways and simultaneously compared them with Nigeria/ African experiences. For example, in comparing institutional practices in Europe and America versus Africa, the English texts say that - "In Europe and America, people feed very well; whereas in Africa, feeding is poor and inadequate. In Europe and America, there are good medical conditions; whereas in Africa, medical services are very poor. In Europe and America education is free; whereas in Africa there is little education. In Europe and America, machines are used in everyday works; whereas in Africa there is much manual labor. In Europe and

America, people live to be very old; whereas in Africa people hardly reach the age of 40 years before they die."[52]

Secondly, the English texts compared social and economic development patterns in other parts of the world with those in Africa. Thirdly, they compared the problems and achievements of political institutions like the United Nations Organization and the British Commonwealth Organization with those of the Organization for African Unity (OAU). The following excerpts are typical of how the texts portrayed the problems of the organizations:

> The OAU has four major problems. The first is language - English and French are used in OAU meetings and the resolutions are also translated into Spanish and Portuguese. Secondly, some of the member-nations are on the side of some world powers. This, therefore, limits their freedom of action. Thirdly, the OAU does not receive enough money from member states because some of them are small and very poor. Fourthly, not all the governments of the African countries are stable. Hardly any year passes without a military coups, followed by lots of bloodshed in one or more of the OAU member-states. 53

On the other hand, the UNO has three major problems:

> First, the UNO is poor because the rich member-nations do not pay their dues regularly. Secondly, the world powers quite often refuse to abide by the decisions of the UNO. Thirdly, many problems are difficult to solve because the five permanent members do not always agree. 54

In the Igbo language texts, however, materials dealing with the outside world mainly described the trade relationship between African countries and other countries outside Africa.

Contents of the English/Igbo Language Texts - Differences and Similarities: Some Observations

In the first place, what did the texts leave out? From the facts and figures given above, it is evident that in the English language texts no connection is made between the school and the home. They were treated as distinct institutions, performing distinct roles. The school is where the child gets

education, and the home is where he eats and sleeps. Secondly, the English language texts are oblivious of the myth attached to the supernatural and the role of the ancestoral spirits in the life of the African (no matter how educated or Westernized he may have become). Thirdly, with reference to materials dealing with health, the English language texts completely ignored the role of the native doctor (or herbalist) in the traditional African society.

The Igbo language texts, in my judgment, did not leave out anything important; more so, as all the materials used were drawn from the child's environment and dealt with issues within his imagery and association - proverbs, riddles, folk tales, folk songs, naming ceremony, title-taking ceremony, festivals, moonlight plays, funeral ceremony, village meetings, secret societies, and so on. Even when the subjects treated are relatively new, they still dealt with imaginative situations in which the child could participate. For example, a story about Enugu as it is told in Ogbalu's Igbo Ụbụ, Book 4, or in Ahamba and Nwoga's Ogugu Igbo 2;[55] might be new to a child from Umuhu Okabia village who has not been to Enugu. However, this child has an uncle, an aunt or one member of the extended family who lives at Enugu, and certainly must have heard a lot of stories about this city within the family circle, before going to school to read about it. In other words, there is continuity between the story the child hears at home and what he hears or reads about in school - thus making the school what it really is - part of the extended family system.

Moreover, the facts and figures above show that the Igbo language texts conveyed more factual information about past and contemporary Africa and taught more about African culture than did the English language texts. The Igbo texts provided the child with a more thorough definition of his family, village and ethnic institutions as a key to understanding African cultural traditions and institutions and the growth of African societies through time and space into

whatever they have become today. The Igbo texts have done this through telling the child in his own language (his mother tongue) stories about his customs, legends, myths, traditions and ways of life.

Furthermore, the Igbo language texts reflected a new and greater sense of national identity and consciousness totally absent in the English language texts. For example, the Igbo texts did not only provide more information to the child about his nation, but had introduced Nigeria and Africa in an endearing language, and thereby encouraged loyalty and affect for specific nation-state symbols and institutions. The Igbo texts introduced the nation as: "Nigeria bu Obodo m" (Nigeria is my country/land); and "Afrika bu ala m" (Africa is my land). The Igbo texts further told the child that Africa and Nigeria possess the most beautiful climate in the world, being "lands of sunshine."

In the English language texts, there are not only meaningless repetitions, but in general, the texts deal with strange concepts beyond the imaginative participation of the child. The following excerpts are typical of the meaningless repetitions in the English texts:

> This is a picture of a boy. His name is David. He is a Nigerian boy. He lives in Nigeria. David lives in a village near some hills. It is not a big village; it is a little village... 56

And,

> David has a sister. Her name is Mary. That is a picture of Mary. She is a Nigerian girl. She lives in Nigeria... 57

Finally, Table 2 shows that the English language texts used from 1957 through 1976 paid more attention to European figures than to their African counterparts. Also, in these English texts, Europeans were named much more frequently than Africans - 42 Europeans against nine Africans in texts in use between 1957-1966; and 23 Europeans against 17 Africans in texts in use between 1957-1976. In the Igbo texts in use between 1957-1966, Europeans were named

much more frequently than Africans - 23 Europeans against 13 Africans. However, in Igbo texts used between 1966-1976, African names appeared more frequently than European names - 31 Africans against seven Europeans.

In conclusion, this study showed that there is such a great gulf of differences between what texts in English and Igbo taught that a change from English into Igbo as the medium of instruction will definitely involve a change in the content of education.

Language in African Education: A Recommendation

The differences delineated above between what the English and Igbo texts taught, raise a number of questions which this short summary has not addressed. First, to what extent are the differences that led to the above conclusion actually due to language, and not to such other factors as - the official policy of government and its contradictions, political instability and the Nigerian/Biafra war, personal whims and experiences of the authors of the texts, standards set by publishers and/or those responsible for school texts, etc? Second, similarities in the use of proverbs such as "East, West, home is best," raise questions as to the origins of these proverbs. Who borrowed from whom? Did the Igbo language borrow from the English or vice versa? Or did both languages borrow from the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs or from the Bible? Or, do the similarities merely portray coincidences in thought among humans? Third, the first question that struck me as I went through the contents of English and Igbo texts is - What is African education and what is it for?

These unanswered questions, notwithstanding my findings in this study, confirm the fears expressed in the literature on mother-tongue education. For example, the facts and figures given above, show that while the English texts presented the child with a view of Igbo national life and culture that is

substantially different from Igbo traditional conceptions; the Igbo texts clearly represented Igbo national experiences, traditions, beliefs, the Igbo dream; in short, the Igbo weltanschauung. The subject matter of education in the Igbo texts dealt mainly with the objective world of the child - his immediate environment and institutions.

This shows that if the Igbo child is to be encouraged from the start to develop curiosity, manipulative ability, iniative, industry, spontanious flexibility, manual dexterity, mechanical comprehension and the coordination of hand and eye, he should acquire these skills and attitudes through Igbo as the medium of education. Moreover, research has shown that children learn more, retain longer, recall faster and perform better when taught in their mother tongue. And, since the average Igbo child attends school for only six years, it is important that he should be taught in Igbo so that he could make maximum use of his limited opportunity.

There are several other advantages for which this recommendation is important. First, it will be very easy to recruit Igbo teachers for the schools. All that is necessary for a teacher is that he should know the language and be able to read and write it, otherwise, his educational level is relatively unimportant. Thus, the basis for recruiting teachers for schools are great, which is not the case with the English language, where a certain amount of education is necessary to avoid creating a new language like creole.[58]

Second, the rural population will no longer be condemned to permanent illiteracy by denying them access to reading materials. Under the present bilingual arrangement, a concentration in the production of books in English (the official language of education) which reaches only a very minority audience, reduces the chances of producing literature in Igbo for the rural population. Third, the preparation of school texts will no longer be the preserve of the

'educated' (meaning, of course, the English-knowing class with university degrees preferably earned from overseas universities). Moreover, economically it will cost much less to produce books in Igbo through local presses rather than the present situation where book production is controlled by European presses who decide what gets published or not.[59]

Fourth, in order to encourage early development of a reading habit in the Igbo child, education must be brought nearer to his environment and reading books for the earliest stage in childhood should not only be written in terms that are meaningful to him, but must have illustrations with which he could identify. Fifth, since the attributes of modernity include rationality, equality and social justice, disparities among individuals and social groups (particularly the English-knowing class) must come to an end. This can only happen through the use of Igbo in primary education which will encourage maximum communication with minimum expenditure of social energy and minimum sacrifice of traditional ideals and democratic socialist values.

Other African states should follow the same example and develop one of their local languages for use in primary education.

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16. See B.J. Carroll, "English as a Medium of Instruction," Education Review (University of Alabama) 14, No. 1 (Nov. 1961), p. 63.

17. P. Wingard, op. cit., pp. 114-115.

18. See Nigeria Educational Research Council, Guidelines on Primary School Curriculum (Lagos: NERC, 1971), pp. xxii-xxiii.

19. I consider the English/Igbo case as representative of the general African experience because the language policy in Nigerian schools is typical of most of Africa (if not, in fact, of all Africa). Like most African nations, Nigeria's colonial heritage and Western ties are very much alive, and, one of the very many problems confronting African schools (with the possible exception of schools in Tanzania) with regards to these ties, is the question of the language medium of education.

20. The East Central State was divided into Anambara and Imo States in May, 1976. This division has no effect on the outcome of this study.

21. Common textbooks were used in all primary schools in the ECS since all the schools were expected to teach the same thing in preparation for the same terminal examinations.

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24. F. G. French, The New Oxford English Course (Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1968), Book 2, pp. 84, 88.

25. French, Book 3, op. cit., p. 14.

26. Tagbo Nzeako, Omenala Ndi Igbo (Lagos: Longman, 1972), p. 23.

27. This does not mean that changes have not taken place over the years, but that these changes have not yet affected the root and will take a long time, if ever, to do so.

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32. Ibid., Part III (Exercise 24, No. 17), p. 176 - In the first place, what is cistern? Why could it not be just a waterpot? Besides, isn't it madness turning on the waste pipe and at the same time trying to fill the cistern?

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43. Nawana, op. cit., p. 73.

44. French, Book 6, op. cit., p. 169.

45. Nwana, op. cit. p. 24.

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47. Ogbalu, Book 4, op. cit., p. 25.

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49. Nzeako, Omenala Ndi Igbo, op. cit., p. 51. Also C. Ogbalu, Igbo Mbu (Onitsha: University Publishing Co., 1965), Book 5, p. 6.

50. French, Book 5, op. cit., pp. 123, 156. Also Fadeiye, et. al., Book 5, op. cit., p. 34.

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52. Fadeiye, et. al., Ilesanmi Social Studies (Ilesa: Ilesanmi Press, 1975), Book 6, pp. 33-34.

53. Ibid., p. 43.

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55. S. Ahamba and D. Nwoga, Ogugu Igbo 2 (Lagos: Macmillan, 1975), p. 1. Also Ogbalu, Book 4, op. cit., p. 26.

56. French, Book 2, op. cit., p. 12.

57. Ibid., p. 80.

58. See Abdou Moumouni, Education in Africa (New York: Praeger, 1968), p. 111.

59. See Keith Smith, "Who Controls Book Publishing in Anglophone Middle Africa?" in Philip G. Altbach and Sheila McVey, "Perspectives on Publishing," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 421 Sept. 1975), p. 149.